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INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000107

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DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL KPKO UN AU SU

SUBJECT: DDDC CONSULTATIONS ONGOING, BUT UNCOORDINATED

¶11. (SBU) Meeting with poloffs on January 23, Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) chair Abdul Mohamed painted a somber picture of the clumsy integration of UNAMID, the DDDC and the Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST). According to Mohamed, no communications or administrative structure have been set up to coordinate the activities of the three bodies. (Note: This observation is in line with what post has heard from AU sources. End note.)

TIJANI SECT ENTERING THE SCENE?

¶12. (SBU) Mohamed said that DDDC consultations in the field were ongoing, concentrating on selecting representatives for a civil society advisory board which would be present at future talks. Mohamed also said that the spiritual leader of the Tijani Sufi sect (of which most Muslims in Sudan are members) would be coming to Darfur next week to engage with civil society leaders and IDPs. Khartoum-based Tijaniya representatives had also engaged the government on the issue of compensation, he said; discussions centered on traditional forms of compensation including monetary payments, land returns and restitution (efforts by various religious leaders and Sufi orders to stop the violence in Darfur have been ongoing for years and all have failed).

¶13. (SBU) Consultations with Arab groups were ongoing, he said, and the DDDC was considering holding separate, low-key workshops to focus on the particular concerns of Arab tribes in Darfur. Poloffs noted the importance of joint consultations, as well, and that consultations targeted solely at an Arab constituency would no doubt be resisted by a suspicious central government. Mohamed suggested that many among the Arab tribes viewed the government's acceptance of UNAMID as a capitulation, and the government was in turn obstructing UNAMID deployment in order to regain ground. The appointment of Musa Hilal to a presidential advisory position was also intended to solidify Arab support for the government, he said, in addition to acting as a counter-measure against recent reported alliances between some Arab tribes and insurgent groups. Hilal is opposed even by parts of his own Mahamid tribe. (Note: According to separate sources, the DDDC's engagement with Arab tribes has been limited, superficial and inconsistent. End note.)

DIASPORA CONSULTATIONS

¶14. (SBU) Mohamed also previewed the DDDC's upcoming consultations with the Darfuri diaspora in Europe and the United States, arranged by Concordis and the United States Institute of Peace. The 'Elders' group would be co-sponsoring the U.S. consultations, he said, as part of their engagement efforts in Darfur. The DDDC itself was expanding its relationships with other international organizations, including seconding consultants

from UNIFEM, UNICEF and local NGOs, as well as bringing in DFID-funded experts. In terms of the public research project undertaken by the Annenberg Foundation during the late summer and now dormant, Mohamed said he was working with the Sudanese government for permission to resume work.

¶5. (SBU) Characterizing the Sudanese government as expert in "managing crisis" rather than welcoming stability, Mohamed thought that the government had been somewhat prepared to negotiate a settlement in Darfur several months ago, but is now less inclined. He cautioned that negotiations should take place as soon as possible after consultations with the movements conclude, or else realities on the ground would shift yet again and render those consultations obsolete.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: The DDDC is still encumbered - though less so - by its affiliation with the DPA, and as such tends to subcontract work to organizations such as Concordis and USIP. It is very troubling that JMST, UNAMID and DDDC activities remain largely uncoordinated, though not surprising given the personalities involved and the frequent turnover of staff in Sudan. While Mohamed was reluctant to advocate setting firm deadlines for consultations and ensuing negotiations, his advice on their rapid sequencing is valid. Post will explore the feasibility of funding a civil society advisor to the DDDC and will consult further.

FERNANDEZ